

## Report on Successful K–12 STEM Education (Conclusion of Series)

*OVAE Connection* is concluding this series on STEM education, which focused especially on the report of the committee for the National Research Council, [\*Successful K–12 STEM Education: Identifying Effective Approaches in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics\*](#), and on the committee's recommendations. These recommendations are presented in two categories: (1) those for schools and districts, and (2) those for state and national policy makers. For a discussion of the merits of each of these proposals, please refer to the report. The recommendations below are cited directly from the report.

The committee made five proposals to schools and districts for improving K–12 STEM education. (1) Districts seeking to improve STEM outcomes beyond comprehensive schools should consider all three models of STEM-focused schools. (2) Districts should devote adequate instructional time and resources to science in grades K–5. (3) Districts should ensure that their STEM curricula are focused on the most important topics in each discipline, are rigorous, and are articulated as a sequence of topics and performances. (4) Districts need to enhance the capacity of K–12 teachers. (5) Districts should provide instructional leaders with professional development that helps them to create the school conditions that appear to support student achievement. School leaders should be held accountable for creating school contexts that are conducive to learning in STEM.

The committee also made recommendations to policymakers that, in its judgment, have the potential to improve K–12 STEM education. (1) Policy makers at the national, state, and local levels should elevate science to the same level of importance as reading and mathematics, and assess science with the same frequency as mathematics and literacy. (2) States and national organizations should develop effective systems of assessment that are aligned with the next generation of science standards and that emphasize science practices rather than mere factual recall. (3) National and state policy makers should invest in a coherent, focused, and sustained set of support for STEM teachers to help them teach in effective ways. (4) Federal agencies should support research that disentangles the effects of school practice from student selection, recognizes the importance of contextual variables, and allows for longitudinal assessments of student outcomes. Federal funding for STEM-focused schools should be tied to a robust, strategic research agenda. Only knowledge of this sort, concludes the committee, will allow a full response to the questions that were put to the committee.

The study, which provides a more comprehensive presentation of the committee's views, also includes the background papers that informed the committee's deliberations. A list of and links to these background papers are in the appendix to the report.

## LINCS to Hold Online Health Literacy Discussion

The Literacy Information and Communication System ([LINCS](#)) will hold a discussion—[How Groups Can Affect Health & Behavior Change](#)—from Nov. 1 to 8, 2011. Peer support has been found to be effective in adult education both when encouraging healthy behavior change and when using health as a context for learning literacy and English as a second language. This discussion will examine several methods of peer support and explore how it may be used to assist patients, students or community members in improving their health. Participants will discuss case studies on: shared or group medical appointments, community health worker programs, health projects based in literacy classes, and formally and informally created support groups.

## OVAE Adult Education Job Announcement

OVAE is hiring an education program specialist (GS-1720-13) to serve on the Innovation and Improvement Team in the Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL). DAEL is responsible for the conceptualization, design, development, implementation, and evaluation of national leadership activities under the *Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Title II of the 1998 Workforce Investment Act*. Applicants are expected to possess knowledge of adult second language learning theory and practice; adult ELL programming issues; research, practice and demographic trends in adult ELL-related fields; and the ability to work collaboratively and independently. The [vacancy announcement](#), including guidelines for the application process, is posted on USAJOBS and **closes Nov. 10, 2011**. OVAE is recruiting from all sources for the position.

## Adult Education and CTE Are Priorities in FY 2012 SLDS Competition

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has [announced a fifth round of Statewide Longitudinal Data System \(SLDS\) grants](#). The grants are for assisting state education agencies in developing and implementing statewide, longitudinal data systems. For this round, applicants may apply under only one of three priorities:

1. To design, develop, and implement a statewide, longitudinal K–12 data system;
2. To develop and link early childhood data with the state's K–12 data system; or
3. To develop and link postsecondary and/or workforce data with the state's K–12 data system.

State education agencies that received SLDS grants in May 2010 under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 are not eligible to participate in this competition. The submission deadline for the SLDS grants is **Thursday Dec. 15, 2011**. NCES announced informational webinars for Nov. 2 and 15 at 3:30 p.m. EST. Questions may be addressed to Emily Anthony, program officer, SLDS, at 202-502-7495.